United Nations A/60/398

General Assembly

Distr.: General
30 September 2005

Original: English

Sixtieth session
Agenda items 119 and 120

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Letter dated 16 September 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you, on behalf of the Chilean presidency of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Final Declaration adopted by the second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, held from 7 to 9 September 2005, at United Nations Headquarters.

This important Declaration, expressing the views of peoples' representatives in parliament, has particular relevance to the items currently under discussion by the General Assembly. I should be grateful if you could arrange for its circulation as a document of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 119 and 120.

(*Signed*) Heraldo **Muñoz**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

05-53231 (E) 041005

Annex to the letter dated 16 September 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

SECOND WORLD CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENTS

United Nations Headquarters, New York, 7 to 9 September 2005

Bridging the democracy gap in international relations: A stronger role for parliaments

Final Declaration

9 September 2005

Parliament embodies democracy. Parliament is the central institution through which the will of the people is expressed, laws are passed and government is held to account. On the eve of the High-Level Meeting of Heads of State and Government, we, the Speakers of the world's parliaments, have met at United Nations Headquarters in New York. We have convened to express the views of peoples' representatives in parliament, take stock of action effected by parliaments since our first Conference in 2000, examine how we can provide more support for international cooperation and the United Nations, and thus help bridge the democracy gap in international relations.

As we adopt the present Declaration, we are mindful of the urgent need for the world community to work in concert in tackling the daunting challenges that face it. We believe that the world has reached a fork in the road, and that the global community must not miss this opportunity to take drastic action. While perceptions of the gravest threats may differ, they will be tackled effectively only if they are addressed concurrently and within the United Nations system. We reaffirm the will of national parliaments to engage wholeheartedly in this effort.

International cooperation

We are convinced that the United Nations must remain the cornerstone of global cooperation. The United Nations Secretary-General should therefore be encouraged to pursue the current reform process vigorously. We commend him for

his comprehensive package of valuable reform proposals set out in his report *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all* (A/59/2005). We urge all parliaments to debate these proposals and engage with their respective governments to create the momentum for action on the clear understanding that democracy, security, development and human rights are intrinsically linked.

There is indeed an urgent need for Member States, including their parliaments, to demonstrate leadership and political will to provide the Organization with more efficient mechanisms and appropriate human and financial resources in all areas, and with a sound basis for effective management reform. Equipping the United Nations to address economic and social development problems more adequately is one such task. In order to reduce poverty and ensure sustainable development, countries need forums in which they can simultaneously negotiate across different sectors, including foreign aid, technology, trade, environmental protection, financial stability and development policy.

The report *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals* argues that development is within the reach of many nations, and gives extensive examples of action countries can take, individually and collectively, to come closer to the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals. Development must remain high on the agenda. We are determined to build the necessary political support for change and action. States must live up to the commitments they have already made to provide development assistance, in line with the Monterrey Consensus and the Millennium Declaration. We welcome the discussion on new and innovative forms of financing for development, which we hope will provide much needed additional resources.

Global security issues should also be tackled more vigorously at the United Nations. Nuclear-weapon States should meet their obligations in nuclear disarmament, and States must make new efforts in all areas of non-proliferation and arms control. Action already taken by the United Nations and its Member States to fight international terrorism is encouraging, but much more can be done, including by concluding a comprehensive convention on terrorism and agreeing upon an internationally accepted definition of terrorism that includes any action which is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, for whatever purpose.

We reaffirm that the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, in particular for women and children, are essential to development, peace and security. We also emphasize that good governance and the

rule of law at the national and international levels are key to sustainable development and world peace. We call upon the United Nations to integrate more fully all three dimensions into its work, and we urge member States to take resolute action to that end.

Parliaments and the United Nations

We reaffirm the Declaration of the first Conference of Speakers of Parliaments (2000) in which we called on all parliaments and their world organization - the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) - to provide a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation. We welcome the progress that has been made by many parliaments to achieve this objective, as evidenced by the IPU *Report on parliamentary involvement in international affairs*. At the same time, we recognize that much remains to be done.

We welcome the United Nations decision to grant observer status to the IPU. This is a first step that opens channels for the Organization to convey the views of the parliamentary community to the United Nations. The time has come for a strategic partnership between the two institutions. We would greatly welcome more substantive interaction and coordination with the United Nations, and call upon the world body to resort more frequently to the political and technical expertise which the IPU together with its Member Parliaments can provide, particularly in areas relating to post-conflict institution building.

We emphasize that parliaments must be active in international affairs not only through inter-parliamentary cooperation and parliamentary diplomacy, but also by contributing to and monitoring international negotiations, overseeing the enforcement of what is adopted by governments, and ensuring national compliance with international norms and the rule of law. Similarly, parliament must be more vigilant in scrutinizing the activities of international organizations and providing input into their deliberations.

We therefore welcome the current debate on how best to establish more meaningful and structured interaction between the United Nations and national parliaments. We reaffirm the recommendations relating to this subject that were contained in our Declaration of the year 2000, and assert that much of this interaction must be firmly rooted in the daily work of our national parliaments. At the international level, we propose to work ever more closely with the IPU, which we consider to be a unique global parliamentary counterpart of the United Nations.

To this end, we encourage the IPU to ensure that national parliaments are better informed on the activities of the United Nations. Moreover, we invite the IPU to avail itself more frequently of the expertise of members of standing and select committees of national parliaments in dealing with specific issues requiring international cooperation. We also encourage the IPU to develop further parliamentary hearings and specialized meetings at the United Nations, and to cooperate more closely with official regional parliamentary assemblies and organizations, with a view to enhancing coherence and efficiency in global and inter-regional parliamentary cooperation.

The IPU is the primary vehicle for strengthening parliaments worldwide, and thus promoting democracy, and we pledge to further consolidate it. We welcome the IPU's report on *Parliaments' contribution to democracy.* We intend to reinforce the IPU human rights machinery so that the world's 40,000 parliamentarians can do the job they were elected to do in greater freedom and safety. We will also continue to support IPU efforts to see that both genders are represented within the ranks of parliamentarians in a more equitable way, and to take action where necessary.

In all of these ways, we will increase the capacity of our parliaments to bring their influence to bear on the work of the United Nations, enhance the transparency and accountability of that world Organization and thus provide an impetus to the reforms under way at the United Nations.

Follow-up and implementation

We resolve to convey this Declaration to our parliaments and urge them to do everything within their powers to ensure that it is followed up in an effective manner. We encourage every parliament to organize, at around the same time each year, "an International Day of Parliaments" and to hold a parliamentary debate on one of the recommendations included in this Declaration. We invite the IPU to forward this Declaration to the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the United Nations General Assembly with a request that it be circulated as an official document of the United Nations. We also decide to convene future meetings of Speakers of Parliaments to review progress in implementing this Declaration, and invite the IPU to make the necessary preparations, in close cooperation with the United Nations.